DIE DREI KRISEN
1920
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Foreword

The following study was written in May of this year as an afterword to a new edition of my *Grundzüge der Weltpolitik* [*Outlines of World Politics*]. It appears as a separate publication at the request of the publisher.
It seeks to do nothing other than to stimulate reflection, to call for composure, to warn: the thoughtless in our torn and tormented homeland, and the even more thoughtless, the victors out in the world.

Berlin, June 1920.

J. J. Ruedorffer.

Without understanding, contemporary man stands before world events. What is taking place, from what causes, and to what end?
Was this best of all worlds hitherto rational, only now to fall prey to madness? Revolutions follow upon one another, and nations rage against themselves. But the world was neither rational until recently, nor has it now abruptly fallen into insanity. A rift has gaped from the very beginning. There are ages that cover it over with all manner of brushwood; generations of men who want to walk along it carelessly or deny it by looking away; and others who are forced to look into it, wanting to turn away shuddering, yet unable to do so. We have passed from an age of the first kind into an age of the second.
What remains to us is the attempt to understand what we are unable to deny. To search amid the confusion of events for the overall context; to unravel from world events the concatenation of the eternal driving forces of the human race and its eternal powers of fate; not to draw consolation from a cheap faith in some meaning and purpose; to look the hardness of things in the face, not pleading that this cruel countenance beguile us regarding itself

through feigned mildness—if ever this was so, it is today, amidst an unspeakable confusion of things, men, and minds, the sole ground from which an action can emerge that does not wish to be mastered as ignorant puppets by blind circumstances, but rather seeks to master them.

Three crises, manifoldly intertwined, seem to me to shake the present age: an external political crisis of the international organization of the world, in particular of Europe; an internal political crisis of states and forms of government; and a crisis of society. Each of these three crises has its economic dimension. Its ramifications reach everywhere, down to the smallest cottage. But while the economic effects are widely discussed and ultimately obvious to everyone, the political causes remain distorted and obscured by the strife of nations and parties. Not to exhaust their deeper connection, but at least to outline it; not to spy out from their interplay the sense or nonsense of what is to come, but yet perhaps to advance reflection in some small measure—such is the purpose of this inquiry.

I.

1.

Some out of ignorance and lack of education, others out of political hostility and for internal or external political purposes, believe—or pretend to believe—that this World War, which has become a global catastrophe, arose merely from historically accidental errors of individual states or statesmen, or was imposed upon the nations and their mutual relations through diplomatic artifice. This delusion is fostered by an inclination implanted in the human race to see the evil of this world and all its misery not in the world itself, but in the sins of individual human beings who have strayed from the paths of goodness and reason. He who seeks historical insight must first of all renounce this inclination. The truth is harder. The political situation of the world before the outbreak of the war was unsustainable. It had become unsustainable slowly and with an inner necessity. This does not mean that the war had to break out precisely in the year 1914 and in this particular constellation, nor that it had to end as it did. Particular details are human work, and in their entanglement lie

luck, skill, clumsiness, and misfortune.

Before the war, the world, and Europe in particular, was organized into nation-states that stood facing one another in armaments that were continually escalating and technically perfecting themselves. Whosoever did not wish to be outstripped believed he had to outstrip others; whosoever was left outstripped alone was forced to seek allies of equal hostility: out of the rivalry of nation-states grew the rivalry of alliance systems. The European balance of power had once again become, in a phrase of Kant's, the balance of a house that collapses whenever a joke alights on one side of the roof. It collapsed after all possibilities of further expansion had been exhausted.[1]

[1]) *I may refer here to the presentation given in my "Grundzüge der Weltpolitik" (Stuttgart 1913). In the new edition of this book requested by the publisher—for whose afterword the following remarks are intended—I have not changed a single word. What I wrote then can today have value only if it remains as it was written, in truth and error, as a testimony of its time. It can bear witness that the author, despite his youth, was not spared from some errors into which older, more experienced, and wiser politicians and writers have fallen; but it can, especially before foreign countries inclined to blame the mental constitution of pre-war Germany for the catastrophe of the war, bear witness that in Germany the dubious nature of the general state of the world, like that of any warlike calculation, the shortsightedness of any chauvinistic reckoning, as well as the character and dangers of a modern war, were not overlooked with the same tragic blindness with which celebrated statesmen once presented silver swords to the Tsar of all the Russias and today still, uninstructed by any experience, wish to lead their peoples—who believe themselves victorious—along the old paths of destruction.*

The more the immediate and broader pre-history of the war is researched, the clearer it becomes to anyone seeking insight rather than bias, guilt, and propaganda: the final decades before the war were nothing other than an uninterrupted, fierce struggle for the last possibilities of political and military superiority, and at best for the final reprieves of a temporary delay. Europe did not step unexpectedly before the abyss of war in July 1914, led by Serbian Carbonari and their backers, or by a reckless diplomacy in Vienna or Berlin. Matters are not so simple or bourgeois. Europe went tottering and groping along this abyss from the very moment the deployment of Europe into two separate alliance systems was completed, and the possibility of armament on both sides approached its limit attainable in a state of peace.

The attempts made in those years by English Liberals or German statesmen to

resolve the dangerous division of Europe into two alliance camps through gradual mitigation failed. The history of these attempts, which is clarifying today, shows that at this stage of development they were bound in all probability to fail. They failed because of the unalterable interlocking of alliance systems that had hardened into mechanisms with their own inherent laws—they failed on the laws of European statics.

When Russian policy in the spring of 1910 was asked to confirm in writing soon after the verbal agreement concluded between the two Emperors—according to which neither state should join an aggressive combination against the other—it refused to do so, in order not to justify the impression that even the verbal agreement had aroused in France. Likewise, two years later, England explicitly rejected the meaningless neutrality formula proposed by the German Imperial Chancellor through Lord Haldane, solely for the sake of the mistrust that would have been awakened by such a formula among nations allied and friendly to England. Neither of the two powers dared to assume even the slightest appearance of a beginning shift in alignment: the alliance system was so bogged down, and the political effect of any change so unclear and unpredictable, that no one dared touch the achieved balance.

On the other side, it was no different. When Sazonov made the remark to Robert von Mendelssohn in the spring of 1914, *"Si vous lâchez l'Autriche, je lâcherai la France"* ["If you drop Austria, I will drop France"], German policy, despite its knowledge of the increasing weakness of its ally, could pay no heed. Under the conditions of the time, even the appearance of such a step—betrayed to Vienna via the Western powers—would with greater probability have loosened the Austro-German alliance just as much as the Franco-Russian one. Thus, the unpredictability and uncertainty of any step mitigating the division of Europe into two camps held both groups of powers fast in the position they had once assumed. At any impulse in this direction, both alliance systems snapped back into their former position like tightly stretched rubber bands, yielding only slightly.

This is the general character of diplomacy in those years, and there is hardly an event that could not be cited to confirm it. From 1908 to 1914, war was averted repeatedly by a hair's breadth: in the year 1911, because Russia was

not ready; on the occasion of the Balkan troubles in 1912 and 1913, because England did not wish it and Germany, to preserve peace, pulled back its ally; and even in the spring of 1914, over a completely insignificant occasion—the appointment of General Liman von Sanders as commander of the First Turkish Corps—because Germany, in response to Russian ill humor, brought about a change in his employment.

The localization of the Serbian-Austrian war in 1914 failed because England and France—though in my conviction not determined upon war in the first days after the ultimatum—did not dare advise Russian policy against general mobilization. They were constrained by the anxiety that a Russian retreat might result in a diplomatic success for the Central Powers, and that out of Russian resentment over this, a reorientation of Russian policy—and with it a shift in the European system of forces—might emerge.

Mightier than the work of individual men was the mechanism of things. I say this only for the sake of the future, which in another form is preparing to fall prey to a no less tragic mechanism.

2.

The great dice-game of war has ended. Fate decided first against Russia, and then with a severity still unimaginable today, against Germany. For a number of reasons, the war has not solved, could not solve, this tragic problem. In more than one respect, it has intensified it and rendered even its provisional solution through the previous means of politics and in the old sense even more difficult.

Before the outbreak of war, the sole hope of avoiding it rested not upon a shared morality among states—which, however much the moralist and human being must demand it, the uncorrupted observer can scarcely discover, for hitherto states as such, despite all moral rhetoric, have been essentially malignant toward the outside world[1]—but rather in a shared interest to be grasped by cool reason.

[1]) *Even Immanuel Kant, though the greatest among idealists and standing far removed from the life of states, was forced painfully to admit this to himself. Kant, "Toward Perpetual Peace", First Appendix: "On the Disagreement Between Morals and Politics." Kant's Works (Cassirer edition) VI, 456. To be sure, he believes, for consolation, that even this malignancy of states lies within*

nature's plan, which, using them as an unconscious instrument, strives toward an ultimate purpose: perpetual peace. But this opinion springs from nothing other than the innate human inclination to foresee steadfastly a meaning and plan in the world even where none is to be recognized.

This interest ought to have presented war to them all as a proposition unpredictable in its outcome, but in any case burdened with immense costs and comparatively meager chances of gain—a proposition seeking to buy, at best even for the victor, a questionable result with a tremendous stake.[1]

[1]) *In the autumn of 1913 (Grundzüge der Weltpolitik, p. 213 ff.), I attempted to explain the prospects of gain and risks of loss in a potential war through a schematic calculation. I sought to make clear in this way that, by human reckoning, a war between two coalitions would be unpredictable in its outcome; and that, owing to terrible weapons unproven in their effects, owing to the commitment of entire national energies and incomparable sacrifices of property and blood, it would prove—even for the victor, and especially compared to the uninvolved bystander—not only a dangerous calculation, but a bad one. This calculation—in particular the assertion that the ratio of gain and loss, risk and danger in our time would differ from all earlier wars—was disputed by critics before the war, but confirmed by the war to an extent terrible even for the victor.*

The course of the war demonstrated first of all that the outcome of wars of this kind eludes all calculation. Germany surrendered the winning of the war before and at the Marne; Russia gambled away an easy success in East Prussia in 1914—for more than three years, fortune and misfortune reeled to and fro. If ever the history of this war and its political-military leadership can be laid bare, both sides will see with regret and shuddering how close they themselves and how close the others brushed past the abyss of ruin. Each partner was sustained by the errors of the other. When the battles of many theaters of war interlock in reciprocal action, the fortune of war becomes doubly blind.

Even the ultimate victor cannot say: "Our calculation was correct," for it was not due to him alone that it did not prove false. So long as this experience of statesmen lasts and becomes the conviction of peoples, it may deter future wars. The memories of combatants regarding the horrors experienced in the trenches may and must have the same effect. The same holds true for the after-effects of the immense sacrifices of property and blood made by the peoples, which must be felt bitterly enough for decades even by the victors.

But all this brings no solution to the unsolved problem of the political

organization of this planet. It intensifies the longing for such a solution, but demonstrates as yet no path. Longing alone will not do it; generations change, and violated and torn peoples do not forget.

3.

Before the war, the question of armaments seemed solvable only through war. The war did not solve it. On the contrary, only the war fully brought to light a strange fatality, continually escalating by necessity, in the life of modern peoples: the tragedy of technical progress.

The life-and-death struggle of nations forced invention upon invention from the human spirit on both sides. Flying squadrons, airships, tanks, submarines, poison gases, artillery of hitherto unimagined power or range: distress and mistrust of the plans of others moved the contestants to see no limits of humanitarian hesitation or financial timidity in the application of these means. Under such compulsion and such financial fertilization, technology accomplished what shortly before was still impossible.

It is too early to clarify fully the disastrous effect of the technical factor on the origin of the war; too early also to disengage from the confusion of interconnections the influence of technical inventions—both direct and widely ramified indirect—upon the decisions and resolves of both sides. It is too early to show how the cruelty of the war implements that grew in this way heightened the peace-retarding hatred of nations into something immeasurable, completely unbridgeable; how the hope of a swift, happy end, perpetually renewed by astonishing new inventions, kept the governments and military commands of both sides from sacrificing the realities of the present and hopes of the future to peace by contenting themselves with partial successes or failures.

Peace inherits the inventions of war. It will not and cannot bury them in army museums. It will and must preserve, cultivate, and further develop them as long as states and nations confront one another lurking and mistrustful like beasts of prey. What if one neglected this and left it to the other? And not only this cultivation and further development, but even this preservation is a thousand times more difficult and oppressive for more than one reason than

before the war. Therefore, when political means are exhausted once again, it must lead even more swiftly, even more inevitably, to new discharges.

Does anyone believe that preparations for such a refined and coarsened mechanized war are even possible without mistrust in a potentially new and this time decisive invention of the political opponent—over or under water, on land or in the air—bringing an altogether unbearable state of permanent unrest over the leadership of states and the feelings of peoples? Does anyone believe the ratio of power among nations would not become even more opaque and unpredictable than ever before? The facts of technology are known to the war participants of all nations, and yet politicians hesitate to acknowledge that their accustomed world of thought has been overturned by these facts.

But technology is not alone; with it and through it, the financial question has also shifted. Financially, too, post-war armaments are beyond comparison with those before the war. The costs of war still weigh upon the states. Not only the vanquished, but some of the victors as well, border on bankruptcy. To impose upon exhausted tax capacity new armaments— armaments incomparably more expensive in both quantity and quality—is madness in the interest of these states themselves. And yet it will happen, unless power becomes rational or reason becomes powerful.

Let no one deceive himself about the state of the world, and in particular of Europe, that must result from such a development. Roles may have changed, but the old game begins anew, still more terrible, still more dangerous. Armaments of exhausted, increasingly self-exhausting states; in their wake an internal situation growing from decade to decade more unbearable; the rising temptation to end this unsustainable condition by any means, even that of despair; lurking mistrust between states, escalating with every new invention, tempting now one, now another—given the unpredictability of technical development—to overstretch political claims in a momentary, accidental superiority.

And this condition of factual power relations, aggravated by the reciprocal effect of the psychological disposition of peoples arising from it and acting back upon it—a nervous unrest which the statesmen of our time, dependent

on public opinion, may perhaps withstand with effort and for a short span of time, but certainly not as a rule and in the long run. Let no one speak of exaggerations: he who wishes to deceive himself may do so and trot along the path of habit anew.

4.

What is to become? Two hopes seem conceivable and are discussed. The one wishes to see the remedy in a new constellation of the Great Powers on the basis of the existing world order; the other seeks to reorganize the forms of co-existence among nations and the settlement of their disputes through a League of Nations. For the first, France fought; for the second, the President of the United States. The result of this struggle, the Peace of Versailles, passes judgment on itself.

As things stand today, even the most hopeful visionary cannot attribute to the present form of the League of Nations the capacity to establish an organization of the political world that is not merely superficially, but factually new. The old forces are powerful as ever, and their means have remained the same. The war brought England and the United States hegemony over the world. Given the caution of English policy in all American questions, given the free and broad sphere of activity for both powers—each of which has the greatest tasks to fulfill on its own and enough to keep its hands busy alongside the other probably for decades—the extra-European world can count for some time yet on quiet prosperity, despite Canadian and East Asian friction points.

Not so the European continent. Here, the war has ended with a French hegemony over a balkanized Europe, tolerated by England. This result is unsustainable. It must lead to permanent unrest and ever-new conflicts, and in one way or another to the sudden downfall or lingering decline of the European continent.

It is idle today, yet instructive for the peculiar nature of the European fatality, to examine what solutions the defeated states, Russia and the Central Powers, had to offer the world in the event of their victory.

The Russians were close to victory both during the autumn campaign of 1914 in East Prussia and during the spring of 1915 in the Carpathians—a victory

which, in view of the dangerous military-political situation of their own allies, could have secured them an undisputed political preponderance if handled with political skill. This was a perspective that not only the affected Central Powers, but even Russia's own allies, could not contemplate without terror.

That a victorious Pan-Slavist Russia had only an imperialist-Russian, but no European—let alone global—solution to offer, not even a Russian would deny. A unification of all Slavs under the scepter of Moscow, extending from East Prussia to the Adriatic and the Aegean Sea, enclosing the Black Sea and sooner or later reaching the Gulf of Alexandretta and the Persian Gulf; forced by internal as well as external reasons to subjugate and to keep subjugated with strong military and police means; certainly incapable and probably also unwilling to develop human freedom and respect the life of nations.

Thus, it would have been a solution more Asian than European, against which Russia's allies would likely, sooner or later, have sought to combine with their former opponents to maintain themselves. Within a short time, the world would have bristled with arms anew, perhaps destroying itself further in even more terrible wars.

This Russian solution is not the solution of a single Russian party, but the genuine, truly Russian one, borne by the mystical faith in a Russian world mission. This faith remains alive under altered words and gestures among the officials of the old regime, the liberal professors of the middle parties, and the fundamentally no less Pan-Russian mystical rulers of the Russia of today, the heirs of Bakunin.

Reflection on the many contingencies of the World War that did not occur due to some political or military accidents reveals to the human mind—which likes to believe in simple connections or even in global purposes—the uncertainty of a groping, continually stumbling fate. If British statesmen were ever to reveal their secret deliberations and anxieties during the World War in memoirs, it would presumably be seen that no less than German victories and the temporary successes of the submarine war, the possibilities of Russian victory were a subject of these worries. The strongest motive and argument of English opponents of war before its outbreak was the fear of the obvious eventuality of a Russian victory accompanied by a simultaneous defeat of

France.

5.

More difficult and closer to a German is the question of whether German policy, in the event of a victory, had a sustainable solution to offer the world, and what kind.

One cannot speak of a unified policy of the German Empire in this war. Policy was uninterruptedly twofold, contending against and crossing itself; and this twofold policy was none at all and had no solution. It must be asked what would have occurred if the one or the other had been able to realize itself purely and rely upon a military victory.

First, as to the former: the solution of the majority of the General Staff and its entourage. This entourage—that is to say, those circles that were protected and supported by the military side, who established and fortified the political power of the military leadership, and who in its spirit and commission fought, crossed, and finally forced the political leadership under their will—advocated its demands publicly. It recognized and demanded complete victory as the prerequisite for their feasibility. The details are known. They do not coincide in everything, but by and large and in their general spirit, they match the conditions for a peace settlement conveyed verbally and in writing to the respective Imperial Chancellors by the most celebrated military leaders on land and sea.

This German military party wanted the same thing that French and English policy strived for in their way throughout the war and ultimately executed. The European may accuse, but English and French democracy must grant a German military party the right to a policy of force of which it was itself guilty; and a comparison of the Peace of Brest-Litovsk with that of Versailles puts an end to all hypocrisy.

In this solution no European, not even a German of sober and real-political insight, could see anything that could have endured. It was to be gained exclusively by force and maintained only through force. If in the West it sought to hold the Flemish coast as a maritime position against England, keep Belgium dependent militarily and economically, annex the iron-ore basin of

Briey to Germany, and in the East dominate the Russian borderlands from Estonia to Romania—then this solution, executed and administered in the spirit that these circles displayed, avowed, and propagated, could have been maintained not only against the entire world with permanent force of arms, but also against the affected peoples only through the suppression of ever-new uprisings, which is to say through the dictatorship of an army of occupation. On this point, even with deficient insight into European conditions and a short memory for the history of these plans and their methods, no doubt is permissible.

To these plans—conceived with the passion of the mind at that time, but without a sense of reality—the political leadership of the German Empire resisted during the first three years of the war. It did not consider the possibility of a comprehensive victory overthrowing all opponents, which these plans presupposed, to be realistically given. But that was probably not the only, nor the essential reason here, why it tried to combat these plans for exploiting such a victory and the spirit in which they were drafted. It considered these plans not only unachievable at present, but also permanently unsustainable; and therefore it considered this spirit not merely soaring beyond real possibilities, but fundamentally mistaken.

Hence, the contrast between the political and military leadership—to which very soon an ever-widening rift in the people themselves corresponded—was not merely a divergent tactical opinion, but a conflict of political orientation. Here lay its inevitability and its irreconcilability, which repeatedly escaped every compromise.

The single German people was split into two peoples of different spirit. The fissure widened. The extremes, mutually supporting and justifying each other, clouded and falsified every insight and deliberation. The intoxication with force of the one thrust the others into sentimentality; the sentimentality of the one nourished and intensified the intoxication with force of the other. Political wisdom, which has nothing to do with either, veiled its head, powerless in the midst of passions.

Herr von Bethmann Hollweg, as a German, was a European. Not merely out of inclination and education, but out of the highly concrete political insight

that the interest and prosperity of Europe is and means the interest and prosperity of Germany. This parallelism of German and European interests—grounded in the geographical position of the German Empire, which was threatened above all others and most strongly affected by every European unrest and insecurity, and grounded also in the natural limitation of its political possibilities—was expressed in a government declaration on the hundredth birthday of Prince Bismarck. It was answered by nationalist opponents with attacks on the "cosmopolitan" Imperial Chancellor: it was not a matter of Europe, which was Hecuba to us, but of Germany.

It was a matter of both. That European suffering is Germany's suffering, the present shows; that Germany's suffering becomes and remains Europe's suffering, the future will demonstrate all the more forcefully to those who still refuse to acknowledge it today.

Had this disposition been placed before a military victory and the possibility of taking pure effect in its exploitation, it would have had to restrict itself to the stabilization of a Central European Confederation. To be sure, such a confederation could as little forgo a strong display of power as a sense for the interests and feelings of its weaker members. A strong, but mentally serene Germany as the advocate of European interests, grasping its own advantage on a grand scale, and not making its power repulsive through foolish gestures—here beckoned goals, more mighty and, for a political people, despite everything more real than the Flemish coast.

This policy failed and was bound to fail. Perhaps only a genius could have guided a politically mature, intellectually united people—one not intoxicated by the gesture of force—along so narrow a path between external and internal passions. The capacity of the German people for such a policy might have been tested in the tasks of occupation in the West and East, which were admittedly rendered difficult by the enemy blockade. But even here its inevitable fate becomes manifest: good intentions and objective achievement negated by the complete absence of any psychological sense; arrogance of power that dispenses with sympathy; sentimentality and sudden fury; the intentions of policy consciously and unconsciously crossed by military execution: both, force and love, always in the wrong place, and in everything

political a complete failure.

We stand here before the following result, which is also instructive for the tragedy of the present state of the world: an insight rare at that time sees through the dubiousness of a German solution by force; it sees through also the danger of that degeneration of states into mechanisms that became increasingly incapable of free, rational decision. Yet it must acknowledge that even that path of reason, which it had to walk in the event of victory, could hardly have been wrung from the hatred of opponents or from its own hubris. At every step it takes, in order not to surrender the state completely to the blind politicians of force, it must bow to fatal half-measures; and after three years of a lonely struggle—perhaps inadequate in technical details and yet not lacking in tragedy—it fails before the alliance of blind passions that have grown up in the military leaders on the one hand, and in the overwhelming power of the mechanisms of public opinion on the other.

6.

French policy has no other solution to the European question than the one it sought to realize in the Paris negotiations: the weakening of the German Empire to the point of destruction and fragmentation. To be strong among weak neighbors is the ultimate conclusion of a simple wisdom. The political world of thought from which this policy springs is rooted in the past, but points to no future.

The victors—that is, the Allied and Associated Powers—did not at any stage of the war possess in their entirety a conception of a reorganization of European conditions, or anything deserving the name of a draft born of one spirit. What they possessed was merely a catalog of war aims put together in various stages out of the blind necessities and momentary accidents of the situation—a catalog forced to register all those promises made from 1914 to 1919 to any open or quiet ally for war purposes. These promises, made to Poles, Czechs, South Slavs, Italians, Romanians, Serbs, Armenians, Arabs—on the whole a hodgepodge of contradictions, unsustainabilities, and new causes of conflict—were made by those who promised for the sake of immediate distress, but not with the idea that an absolute victory could ever make them

presentable for full redemption.

Victory caught the Allied and Associated Powers *de facto* unprepared and bound by a series of ill-considered and confusing commitments: it took no less than half a year before they agreed among themselves at least upon the program to be imposed upon the vanquished, at least so far as Germany and German-Austria were concerned. The affairs of the Balkans and the Near East are today, a year and a half after the conclusion of the armistice, still completely unsettled. This loss of precious time—a gruesome testimony of helplessness—has intensified the European crisis many times over. While the doctors of the European hospital were attempting to agree, a portion of the patients half-decayed or fell into chronic decline.

But even more unfruitful than the loss of time is the work itself, born sick and weak out of senile hatred. The Allied and Associated Powers simply cannot be regarded by their actions as a political subject capable of setting unified goals. The treaty is primarily the work of France, representing the strongest hatred and the greatest continental interests.

The ultimate goals of French hatred were, to be sure, damped, hindered, and forced onto detours by the necessity of occasionally soothing the pangs of conscience of the President of the United States, who was committed to the appearance of his 14 Points—hence the policy of force, draped here and there with a hypocrisy that does not soften cynicism, but heightens it. The financial and economic sense of the treaty with Germany is the ruin of German economic life. That was the intention on the part of France, and it is the effect.

While the German people itself does not yet seem to know the extent of its plunder and impoverishment—wherein understandable psychological inclinations mix with the beguiling effects of paper currency—the representative of the British Treasury at the Paris Conference, J. M. Keynes, in an honest book, has exposed before the world the cruel nonsense, the absurd history of origin, as well as the inevitable consequences of the economic provisions of the treaty. If the authors of these provisions should realize their unfulfillability and justify the treaty by arguing that they do not insist on literal execution, they thereby condemn the treaty itself: treaties are

meant to be reliable foundations for the co-existence of peoples, meant to give the economic planner as well as the merchant the possibility to calculate and work with relative certainty. This treaty, however, surrenders even the future work of an entire people, at best, to a foreign grace fluctuating according to manifold motives—a grace that raises hopes only to disappoint them again, suffocating all systematic work in uncertainty. Even any attempt to justify this destructive work through mitigation must fail: the Germans will hardly thank the merciful victor who excuses them from one out of five modes of death.

The territorial sense is the greatest possible reduction of the German nation-state; the fragmentation of the German national community through the severing of parts of Germandom in the North, East, and at the Belgian border; through the assignment of three million German Bohemians to Czechoslovakia; through the prohibition of the union of German-Austria; the creation of as many friction points and as much hostility around Germany as possible; and to top it all off, as the sense of the occupation of the territories on the left bank of the Rhine, the endeavor to force their separation—unachieved in the peace treaty—through the pressure of occupation.

The military provisions serve the same overall purpose. Germany must be disarmed, rendered completely defenseless. While Germany is to disarm, the new state formations on its eastern border are artificially equipped into military powers under French aid and leadership with old war material and new branches of the French armaments industry. Creusot buys the Skoda works and establishes branches in Warsaw. France borrows what it can always borrow despite its own weakness, but—as before the war with Russia—with the stipulation that it be used for armaments purposes.

The treaties with German-Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey are children of the same spirit. Their economic sense is plunder. Paris also knows that neither German-Austria nor Hungary can survive economically. Plunder by treaty is further complemented by private plunder. People buy up whatever can still be used—factories, forests, mines, and antiques—and leave the unusable remainder to decomposition. The unfortunate countries, through the meager proceeds of this clearance sale, delay the dying off of their surplus

population for a short while longer, only to let the rest of their human beings languish, all the more thoroughly impoverished, in a completely primitive agrarian economy. Neutral, allied, and associated relief committees of good will appease the world conscience and ensure that Viennese children do not have to die of starvation in their very first years of life.

The territorial sense of the treaties is—partly by intention, partly by incapacity—complete disorganization. It was easier to dismember the body of the Austro-Hungarian state than to keep the twitching parts alive. The former Austro-Hungarian state united, for better or worse, lands and peoples that could live neither with one another nor without one another. It did not develop them particularly well, but nevertheless, with a great traditional routine, organized their mutual bickering into forms that were cheerful here and there, but always tolerable. Thus, it did not plug a source of eternal unrest and conflicts, but allowed it to ripple along in a reasonably regulated bed.

Sooner or later, to be sure, even under peaceful development, Viennese arts would have reached their limit. Not reflecting that Disraeli's word regarding Turkey—that if it did not exist, it would have to be invented—applies even more to Austria-Hungary, the leaders of the Entente, instead of imposing upon the old state a federative reconstruction or at least the maintenance of economic unity, smashed the entire structure. Then, probably recognizing the unviability of the majority of its parts, they played with the idea of a Danube Federation, and—themselves divided—proved incapable of reuniting what had been divided.

Thus the nation-states are there. Some—German-Austria and Hungary, the enemies of the victors—trimmed from all sides to the point of unviability; others—Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Romania—expanded as allies beyond their capacity, each endowed with minorities of foreign race and language, in part pieced together from disparate components, all burdened with the hatred and hostility of all their neighbors. Whosoever can arm, arms; general uncertainty is even more paralyzing than were once the methods of government of the Dual Monarchy; and what the Allied and Associated Powers call peace is nothing but latent war.

To Czechoslovakia $3\frac{1}{2}$ million Germans have been assigned; to

Yugoslavia and Romania no fewer than $3\frac{1}{2}$ million pure Hungarians. Yugoslavia has in the Banat, in the Bačka, and Baranya a majority of Germans, Romanians, and Hungarians; in Southern Styria and Carinthia large German language areas; in Dalmatia it has Italian fragments and will receive in the south compact, purely Albanian areas. On top of all this, no one yet knows whether the three leading nationalities of this nation-state—the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes—really form one nation. It began with centralism, but already today autonomists and federalists have the upper hand. Perhaps here, as in Czechoslovakia, a small Austria must be formed instead of the large Austria.

Thus Southeastern Europe is balkanized up to the German border. The same has happened with Northeastern Europe, where Poland and Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia lurk at each other hostiley, and on top of that a nebulous White Russia is supposed to emerge. The policy pursued there is, despite the League of Nations and membership in it, entirely Balkan. Uprisings, assassinations, small military coups and occupations, armaments for war and eternal threats, ephemeral alliances, shifting constellations—and amid all this the victorious Great Powers, acting in secret, each for itself and against the influence of the others. Thus complete disorganization, paralyzing every recovery, consuming the goods still existing, and forced to consume itself in shifting wars.

Not satisfied with this result, French policy seeks to balkanize Germany as well, to sever the Rhineland, to split South and North. France, clinging with a tenacity without equal to the political ideas of hegemony that it was able to exercise in the 17th and 18th centuries over a fragmented Europe, wishes to bring back this 17th and 18th century, even though its return brings death to an interim industrialised Europe. In foreign policy, France has never advanced beyond the traditions of these centuries; even the most terrible catastrophe has not allowed new political thoughts to emerge, indeed has barely taught it to understand them.

This French solution to the European question is negative, not positive; destructive, not constructive. For no other people is the overall European concept so difficult to grasp, national passion so inaccessible to control by reason. The struggle that the French will to rule waged before the war against

the lessons of a declining birth rate and declining economic strength could be called heroic; the disproportion between the capacity to rule and the will to rule could be called tragic. Both may today—when a victory of never-hoped-for magnitude has struck the victorious country almost to death—appear doubly heroic and doubly tragic as the spectacle of a struggle against fate.

France possesses neither the human nor the economic and financial resources for the policy it pursues. It manages with difficulty to cope practically with the Alsace-Lorraine problem, and would bound to fail both in the forcible domination of the Rhineland and in its peaceful penetration. For both, more is required in the long run than soldiers, and this "more" is lacking.

The political domination of a fragmented Germany; hegemony over Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and the Balkans; claims to the old French paramount position over Turkey; and on top of all this the domination of a giant colonial empire—all this with a nation of *rentiers* whose national passion in the long run can neither conceal the missing sense of reality nor fill the gaps in economic and organizational strength. France cannot objectively solve these tasks; it feels itself economically too weak and, out of this feeling of weakness, is too mistrustful to dare—under its system of hegemony—to let the European peoples work together peacefully and flourish, each doing its part. It will continually endeavor to keep wounds open everywhere, to keep the neighbor weak not only militarily but in every other respect; it will replace the missing capacity for organization with the art of disorganization, ruling through destructive means, not constructive ones—that is to say, practically speaking: supporting the Independents in Germany, and in Poland that ultra-nationalism which, despite the clear insight of all that Poland cannot flourish without working together with its German neighbor, knows in its relationship to Germany only unproductive hatred and sabotaging chicane.

France will perhaps be able, following the teachings of Richelieu and Talleyrand, to carry out this policy for a considerable time using the means of old diplomacy and the new arts of newspaper demagogy, perhaps also sacrificing its Syrian and some of its African positions piece by piece as compensation to England for the outward maintenance of these claims; but one day the whole system will collapse from its unsustainability, and the ruins

of Europe will bury proud, irrational, dream-bound France beneath them as well.

The European condition, unsustainable before the war, has become a hundred times more unsustainable through war and peace. At that time, a magnificent but thoughtless prosperity threatened to be swallowed up by a world war, collapsing against the instability of the European balance of power. It was the common interest of the European peoples to avoid this world war. Lack of insight into this commonality, lack of a cool political leadership surveying the common danger and independent of demagogues, allowed it to break out.

The war is over: it has shattered every single nation of the European continent and organized the whole to the utmost degree of disorganization. The peoples of Europe, individually or together, in their present state incapable even of living—let alone healing the wounds of war—are placed before the choice: to find new paths and pursue them with determination, or to perish entirely.

II.

1.

This crisis of the political organization of the world—far from being resolved by the Treaty of Versailles, but rather exacerbated—is only one side of the great world crisis of the present age. In its origin and impact, however, it is most closely linked to a second crisis, and this second one, in turn, to a third. The second is an internal crisis of states and forms of government which, having everywhere strayed from their ideal purpose owing to intricate, intractable, and generally misunderstood causes, seem capable of acting not according to an overall plan of calm reason, but merely according to accidental side-considerations and auxiliary influences. The third, the crisis of society, appearing in the wake of the first two, has seized and consumed the East of Europe, Russia, in the form of Bolshevism. In the history of their origin as well as in their further development, these three crises interlock in continuous reciprocal action. Taken together, all three encompass the entire organization of the human race and, in their mutual entanglement, form a world event that will divide the ages perhaps more profoundly than the

Migration of Peoples or the discovery of America.

The crisis of the world's organization would not have broken out with such dreadfulness or, having broken out, would not have advanced to such incurability, had it not been tied in closest reciprocal action—acting and acted upon—to a crisis of states that seem intent upon refuting themselves.

By the crisis of states, I do not mean the revolutions that have broken out in individual nations, but rather the disproportion revealed in all states between the conduct of states and the purpose of the state—between a certain inner inevitability and the demands of reason. States, through the development of their inner nature, seem to have become incapable of mastering their proper tasks: their actions are result and consequence, not deliberation and goal.

I am aware that this assertion will be contested and this crisis denied. As familiar and self-evident as the causes and facts of that crisis of the political organization of the world may be, the causes of the irrational conduct of states remain equally misunderstood and veiled, attributed mostly to the faults of individual personalities and parties, but not to a general aberration of the states themselves.

That the vanquished would have done better to end the war—earlier if possible, and with sacrifices if necessary—will not be disputed. That the victors too, if they had wished to or could have satisfied reason, ought to have sought and found an earlier end can properly be asserted in view of the sacrifices, the shift of political and economic power relations in favor of neutrals and a few less-affected belligerents, and in view also of the dangers barely escaped. The question that must be asked is: What prevented individual states from following the dictates of reason and their own interest?

2.

There is no doubt that Russian policy during the war could have secured an advantageous peace in moments of favorable circumstance, and a peace without sacrifices during the long period of its increasingly severe defeats. The Russian statesmen of all cabinets from August 1914 to November 1917 must have known this, and did know it. German policy hardly concealed its readiness for such a peace publicly—and then only so far as required by

political consideration for the effect of a German offer, which would have diminished rather than increased the psychological possibility of a separate peace—while making it known confidentially, both directly and indirectly, to every Russian politician of weight on every available occasion. And this not out of any special fondness for Russia, but for the simple reason that in Germany, searching for a favorable opportunity for peace, hope was placed again and again precisely in the East, in a Russian autocracy diverted from Pan-Slavism by its defeat in foreign affairs.

Russia failed to take advantage of these opportunities not because it was an autocracy. Russian statesmen and probably even the potentates of the court, recognizing the situation and the rising internal and external dangers, could at least have concluded peace had they retained their free flexibility of action. But the Russian government too was deprived of this freedom of movement by an alliance—formed and active before the war and developed unhindered during it—between the Pan-Slavist organizational apparatus, industrial committees, and newspapers, held together and guided by its Western allies and their money. During the heyday of Russian war enthusiasm, with the help and tolerance of the Russian government, a powerful mechanism had been created out of all these forces, economic interests, and corruptive influences existing alongside and outside the state. Ensnared in these fetters, the freedom of movement and independent will of the Russian state in foreign policy were suffocated. A monstrous propaganda settled like a thick fog over the land, and a completely blinded people, proud of its loyalty and sentimentally agitated, marched to its doom.

A future science that will finally turn its attention to the psychology of the masses will find an instructive tragedy in the methods and history of this delusion. The Russian people ended up believing that the German merchant had economically subjugated and bled Russia white; that the German soldier—as newspapers and films were made to report and hired wounded men were made to recount before assemblies—gouged out the eyes and tore out the tongues of prisoners; that the very thought of peace was a betrayal of the allies that would forever disgrace the Russian name; and came to view the growing longing for peace as a secret sin—a general atmosphere in which

every single impulse of reason among the responsible leaders of state had to hide, and in hiding, suffocate. Russia no longer thought or acted.

When, in the first months of 1917, the leading men finally seemed to seek the path to peace that the people silently longed for, the entire structure of the existing regime collapsed because that machinery, driven by the Allies to prevent the allegedly impending separate peace, allied itself with the revolutionary movement. And just as the old regime might still have maintained itself for a time had it sought and accepted peace in due season, Kerensky and the Duma could have held their ground and avoided the second revolution had they brought peace to the country alongside the overthrow. The people wanted peace; even the men at the head of the new government had to reckon with this in their programmatic declarations and demanded it according to the principles of the socialist program. From Germany came a public response of assent, but once more that machinery of committees and newspapers—composed of foreign political and Russian private interests—succeeded in imposing upon leaders and led alike, in place of the simple insight that only peace could save the country and the revolution, the delusion that the new freedom could redouble the forces of the state and its economy, and that only through it had victory become possible.

Thus Russia, bound to its allies by sentimental shame, staggered from one illusionary hope into another, and finally into the abyss of complete self-destruction. In place of statesmen as well as the popular will, that machinery became decisive and active. It subdued the will of statesmen and violated the will of the people in an unparalleled overstraining of conditions and moods, until the general catastrophe buried this machinery as well, and the ruin of Russian industry and the departure of the allied diplomats brought the tragedy to its close.

3.

For Germans, this degeneration of the state and of statesmen, though a general phenomenon of the age, may become clear from the history of their own state—history that has admittedly been obscured in many ways within Germany itself. German policy could well have avoided this war, if not a

world war altogether. To be sure, in the years from 1890 to 1908, it would have had to refrain from seeking prestige successes in a pursuit that earned the state's leaders the applause of newspaper readers, favorable repercussions on party politics or even elections, or the paper glory of the moment. It ought not to have provoked, unsettled, or blocked the path of the three Great Powers surrounding Germany, more through words and the outward appearance of deeds than through any internal intention. It ought to have directed the irrepressible urge for activity of the German people into a specific, politically possible direction compatible with world peace, instead of stimulating but failing to satisfy it—without plan or coherence—through the illusion of naval power, or through positions in the Near and Far East that were unsustainable in the long run, the *fata morgana* of an empire stretching from Berlin to the Persian Gulf, or a center of culture on the Pacific Ocean isolated despite the strongest fortifications.

Simultaneously, the Russians were contested over Constantinople, the British over naval supremacy, and—straying from a still valid Bismarckian maxim—the French over colonial expansion; and in an age of imperialism, Germany was wrongly surprised that the three powers, forgetting and postponing old rivalries, joined together first against the one power that sought to stand in everyone's way. This failed policy is largely, but not—as is commonly believed—solely the fault of the flawed foreign-policy judgments and calculations of diplomats. It is the fault of failed actions and gestures, and these arose not so much from a lack of diplomatic insight as from the inclination or temptation to satisfy parties or newspapers for domestic political ends through acts and gestures of foreign policy, even against better judgment, and from a rapidly growing dependence of the government during this period on a certain apparatus of associations and organizations that it may have needed and created to pass military bills.

Such apparatuses and mechanisms—as demonstrated not only by the history of the German Navy League and Defense League, but by the history of all analogous structures in all countries—possess a natural and easily explicable tendency to expand not only in membership, but also in their urge for activity and sphere of tasks. They must be kept occupied and appeased, even when the

special task for which they were created to agitate has been resolved or is currently dormant. Once born, they exist with a will of their own, and only rarely can their creators rid themselves of the spirits they have invoked. The political world is full of such structures which, with the vital drive once placed within them, transform the power that created them into powerlessness by entangling it. This is a phenomenon of all countries and times, but in ours it has overgrown the state in an unprecedented manner and grown into a tragic fatality.

Prince Bismarck used demagogic means after the pattern of Napoleon III with sovereign technique to subject the parties to his will, for electoral purposes, or to force laws through parliament. But never did he make concessions in foreign policy to such a technique of domestic politics; rather, he used its arguments only when foreign affairs required or permitted it. His foreign policy was autonomous, conducted by him according to its own laws and requirements. He subordinated domestic policy to foreign policy, not foreign policy to domestic.

The greatest technician of those means among his successors reversed this relationship. He subordinated foreign policy to domestic policy and sacrificed the substance to the technique of self-preservation—in concessions that seemed small and personally tolerable to him, but were nevertheless fateful for the future. He occasionally rattled the saber abroad for domestic electoral purposes; sought the applause of parties he needed in forceful words; and, for the sake of the Boer partiality of German parties and newspapers, made Chamberlain bite on granite at the wrong time. To keep the people occupied, he sought fleeting prestige successes, and even more their illusion, now here, now there, without a long-term plan. He cultivated that dangerous apparatus of associations and organizations and needed them for domestic political ends; to be sure, he did not and could not satisfy their growing demands in the realm of foreign policy, and occasionally had to oppose them, but then always took care to appease them through a mock trial.

These mock trials characterize the German policy of this period and led from success to success into a European constellation in which the simultaneously alarmed opponents all around joined together in an overmighty alliance

against the German Empire. And yet the German people would do wrong to attribute the blame for this development solely and exclusively to Prince Bernhard von Bülow or to the peculiarities of the Emperor, which came to meet this policy of the Prince helpfully—fought by him here and there, but also often used and cultivated. The German people in these decades applauded the greatest errors most loudly; statesmen drifted comfortably and skillfully with the general current; and more important than the guilt of individuals is the beginning degeneration of the state.

In the years from 1909 to 1914, a man with opposite inclinations and talents attempted, at the head of the German state, the opposite policy using opposite means. Herr von Bethmann Hollweg, incapable of that demagogic technique but also not subject to its temptations, wanted to free German policy from the entanglement of those well-meaning but willful associations and mechanisms, and once again subordinate domestic technique to the objective interest of foreign policy. But his attempt to extricate Germany from the suffocating encirclement through a calm policy—one meant to eliminate the piled-up conflict material through understanding and compromise, to dismantle unsustainable positions of prestige, and to give the German urge for activity a viable direction—failed.

It is idle today to debate whether the delay was the decisive factor or a half-heartedness of resolves, and whether this half-heartedness was due to errors of the leading statesman or imposed upon him by the distribution of real power in the state and public opinion. The very newspapers and individuals who attacked the Chancellor before the war for this attempt, thereby restricting his power, accuse him today of weakness because this attempt—undertaken against the general stream—failed due to insufficient vigor. I do not hesitate to see in this cheap accusation merely another sign of the personal impoverishment of the age. But even those whose comfortable addiction to seeking the blame for all misfortune in the errors and weaknesses of individuals has turned the belief in this insufficient vigor into a fixed conviction thereby acknowledge the force of the resistance that stood in the way of a pure operation of a policy of reason. And if statesmen are less and less able to wring reason from growing resistance, requiring an increasing measure

of technique and strength and ultimately an excess of human capacity, that too is a degeneration of the state, whose affairs must not be pinned on the miracle of genius.

If at all, German policy after 1909 could have avoided the World War only if it had executed a radical retreat, whether toward the Russian or the English side, renouncing the fleet or relinquishing Constantinople and their Balkan claims to the Russians before the First Balkan War. Where is the audacious soul who dares assert that such a policy could have been wrung from parliaments, parties, associations, and the totality of their machinery—from a people that accused every one of its statesmen of weakness and cheered the uniformed demagogue as a hero?

Not only these, but far smaller backward movements were unfeasible. There was no political official of the German Empire who had ever set foot on the soil of East Asia and considered the demilitarization—if not the return—of the Kiautschou outpost to China desirable and prudent, nor anyone even moderately familiar with the distribution of power in Germany who would have considered such a retreat enforceable against storms of indignation. In the most critical situation, the leader of the Conservatives before the 1912 elections thundered against a government that saw the only way out in an understanding with England, pointing at England and declaring: "There stands the enemy!" The words with which the Chancellor countered him apply to this as to countless other cases.

Always the same spectacle: the will to reason entangled, overgrown, and hindered a thousandfold by those fatal mechanisms of opinion-making; and let no one believe they are saying anything essential when they place the blame on an individual—Tirpitz or the Kaiser, Bassermann, Heydebrand, or anyone else. Those mechanisms, once created by men according to the secret inclinations of the time, but existing ever since with their own laws and will, now create men: hunger for power and ambition offer themselves to them, the name matters nothing, and the machine stamps representative puppets into leaders of heroic stature.

The war accelerated the pace of this degeneration. Before the war, it was the political associations created here and there, growing slowly, that forced their

own will upon the parties that needed them for electoral purposes, founded and bought newspapers, and attempted to guide the hand of the state and its government. The decisive step occurred when the great economic powers, becoming increasingly politicized, allied themselves with this apparatus and developed a taste for its methods. This happened in Germany later than in the other modern Great Powers. This development, already a calamity before the war, became entirely so during the war and, through its direct and indirect effects, brought about the collapse of the state.

The revolution cannot flatter itself with having halted or even slowed this process. It accelerated it, because it further shook the tradition of objectivity still living within the civil service that countered it, without having been able to create a new counterweight in a unified political ethos of the people to this day. Deeper than the external form of government, this development continues straight ahead through all transformations. Today, half-free governments fluctuate along an uncertain path between Legien and Stinnes, changing frequently.

4.

The Russian and German examples may suffice. Even the individual Frenchman knows today that a premature peace of understanding would have been better than the most brilliant victory. Italy too knows that through neutrality, the country could have reaped the essence of what victory brought in foreign policy, and spiritually and economically enjoyed wealth and prosperity instead of impoverishment and disruption. But neither was France free to conclude peace, nor Italy capable of remaining neutral. In both states, reason of state had been overwhelmed, entangled, and fettered from within.

To England and the United States, the war brought immense advantages—though not yet secured against the repercussions of the catastrophes in the rest of the world. But just as the gambler cannot attribute a win to his own prudence, England cannot claim that a course of war in which Germany defeats Russia and is then beaten in the West could reasonably have been hoped for. A Russian victory, however, would have been more dangerous to the World Empire than a German one. For the United States, this war was

merely a colonial war; moreover, a policy of active neutrality could have yielded the same or greater gains politically and economically with fewer sacrifices. The entry of the United States into the war was likewise not a free decision of reason, but ultimately forced by an alliance of German blunders, American private interests, and English propaganda.

The inhabitants of the German trenches on the Western Front were able to see from Henri Barbusse's war book that the fate and psychology of the enemy over there were identical to their own in all human aspects; and that over there as over here, contempt for death, fear, wit, coarseness, comradeship, modesty and boastfulness, worries about food, tobacco, and clothing, filth and homesickness were mixed into the same picture of eternal humanity. States too resemble one another more than they believe. The Entente newspapers wrongly outlawed Prussian militarism, and the German submarine press was no more justified in condemning Lord Northcliffe and *Le Matin*, or the methods with which the street in Rome or Bucharest drove a still half-unwilling people into war.

An investigation into the development of states yields the same picture everywhere. Some perished from the same disease, others became chronically ill, while the divine gift of an improbable victory may help others overcome severe illness: the outward appearance differs, but the essence is the same: monarchies and democracies are equally degenerate.

To be sure, states accomplished monstrous things—wringing an exertion of strength and a technical-organizational achievement from their peoples whose possibility the boldest fantasist did not suspect before the war. Unheard-of human sacrifices they brought upon themselves for the sake of this achievement; but neither the victor nor the vanquished was guided by reason when sacrifices, gain, and danger were weighed. Everything through the state and everything for the sake of the state—the spectacle of a monstrous achievement—but this self-purpose and this achievement breeding against themselves, ultimately destroying themselves. This tragedy of the state, which the war revealed but did not end, is more deeply rooted and harder to cure than the believer in routine imagines.

This inner fatality of states, like the outer one, was not resolved by the war.

Just as it rendered the preservation of peace difficult before the war and prevented its conclusion during the war, so after the war it contributed to ruining the peace and prevents a return to reason after the peace. From its own effects it continually draws new strength as an evil that, continually breeding, must bear evil. The new, weak states—which can be kept afloat only through ever-anew whipped-up nationalism—are doubly exposed to it; old states have been brought by defeat to the brink of a despair that is no friend to reason. They fluctuate gropingly between extremes, dependent on every accident, sick, incapable of long-term plans, and resisting any firm, calm leadership.

Among the victors, the one most important for the European continent, France, has been completely deprived of the capacity for real judgment and calm action by the intoxication of victory, inherited dreams and claims, and the anxieties and fears rising from actual, yet feverishly veiled weakness that nevertheless cannot be banished.

English and American collaborators in the inter-allied peace negotiations, indignant and disgusted, revealed too much from behind the scenes of the Paris proceedings for any allied statesman today to claim that rational deliberation or any constructive thought dictated the Peace of Versailles. The promises given by the victorious Western Powers to their peoples; the compulsion not to become unfaithful to former campaign slogans; the feverish attempt to distract their own peoples from domestic questions and drown out the question of their own share of guilt in the war and its prolongation through mock trials of revenge and punishment; mass suggestions of hatred artistically created and cultivated over long years for war purposes, which had grown into invincible powers—partly as unwilling prisoners of all these dependencies, partly as voluntary and unconscious puppets, the statesmen of the Entente brewed together the most thoughtless of all treaties ever concluded, made entirely of contradictions, in the great cooking pot of compromises.

Germany is deprived of coal, machinery, colonies, ships, foreign trade, and property, and then required to pay the disability pensions of the whole world after being plundered by war, blockade, armistice, and peace. All this wrapped

in a League of Nations intended to guarantee a lasting peace, but bound to collapse under the internal unsustainability of this peace, for whose protection it is abused. I do not believe that Georges Clemenceau would have been receptive to the rational consideration that a sustainable peace with less harsh conditions would also be the wiser calculation for France. But even if that were so, or if a more insightful and far-sighted mind had stood in Clemenceau's place, the hatred of the people, the parties and slogans, the impossibility of robbing the French people of their illusion would have forced anyone else, by and large, into the paths Clemenceau trod. Reason, even if it came to power, would be bound hand and foot a thousandfold in France, entangled in the mesh of old and new lies, slogans, considerations, dependencies, and parliamentary ambitions.

As little as Lloyd George knows Europe, the inner contradictions of the treaty cannot have escaped him. But he too was the prisoner of the "man in the street" fed on slogans, the slave to the promises with which he had conducted the election campaign in November 1918. And even more so the small states: neither Poland nor Czechoslovakia would have been in a position to forgo any annexation, whether for the sake of European peace or even merely for their own future interest.

5.

The fatality continues to operate after the peace. The Allied and Associated Powers are making no progress with the remaining peace settlements. Today, 20 months after the armistice, neither the Hungarian nor the Balkan question, nor the Turkish question, nor indeed any question has been resolved. On the other hand, an infinity of new ones has been created. Austria is dying, to the shame of the Entente. The Entente sees clearly enough that the Treaty of St. Germain is senselessly cruel and criminally stupid, but can do nothing other than deceive the world conscience through charitable gifts and child rescue efforts.

Czechoslovakia seems to suffer from the artificial connection with Slovakia—but neither the Czechs nor the Paris creators of this connection are capable of drawing conclusions from beginning insight, and must leave to future conflicts

the solution they could seek consciously and peacefully. The Polish state, threatened by severe social illness, must intoxicate itself in militaristic joys, whip up chauvinism time and again as a state-preserving principle, build branches of the French armaments industry, and take over old cannon, yet can produce nothing other than ever-new bank notes and spend them for nothing other than military purposes. Secretly, the worry weighs upon all as to how this is to end, but no one can dare speak of it publicly.

France, too weak for productive support and organizational promotion, sees a danger even in the insight sprouting here and there in Poland that one must come together peacefully with Germany as neighbors for joint economic work, and stokes Polish-German hostility. France knows that a Germany losing Upper Silesia will be able to pay not merely now, but in no future, even a fraction of the sums France expects and needs. And yet it does everything to favor an acquisition of Upper Silesia by Poland—forced, for the sake of maintaining a flawed policy, to commit ever-new errors, dependent upon its own work.

In Poland itself, things unfold with inner necessity. Successive cabinets resemble one another in their lack of inner freedom, and even the most insightful person could only be a puppet before he had created for himself—through years of effort in buying newspapers and banks, interest groups, and party foundations—a machinery strong enough not to break the blind necessity of opinions, but yet to bend it slowly. But even if that succeeded artificially, what effort, what cumbersome political action! With such constraints on reason, Europe cannot be set in order.

The history thus far of the execution of the unexecutable Versailles Treaty provides examples enough. How much unrest and uncertainty could have been avoided if France had wished to settle the extradition demand amicably with Germany in due time—a demand whose unfulfillability its leading men had to realize, and did realize, as early as the summer of 1919. Because the French government did not dare to be rational, French policy, yielding to pressure from its allies, suffered a defeat and reluctantly allowed the hated, mentally and physically broken opponent to make the astonishing experience that even the No of the weak can sometimes prevail. Furthermore, France

also aroused world opinion against itself on this issue, thus acting contrary to its own interest in a threefold respect.

In this case too, French statesmen excused their cruelty outward and their clumsiness inward with a reference to the compulsion of public opinion—a reference characteristic of the political conditions of our time. French policy would hardly have answered Germany's police action in the Ruhr region during the Easter days of this year with an advance into the Main region—hard to justify before its allies and world opinion—if M. Millerand had been able in free resolve to listen to no other interests than the foreign political interests of France. But as it was, given the parliamentary situation at the time, he feared giving the opponents of the cabinet the hoped-for opportunity for a success, and seeing M. Barthou, supported by Marshal Foch, emerge as victor over his insufficiently "national" cabinet. Similar examples are provided day after day by the history of every country.

6.

There is no period in world history in which reason could have boasted of complete freedom of movement. Political action was always a compromise between willing and being able, duty and existence. But degrees and forms of this lack of freedom distinguish the ages. To ours, the inevitability of political course seems to become a fatality.

The state is the body of the nation. It enables or should enable the nation to act in a unified manner with sense and understanding, according to plan and purpose. To discover, preserve, and secure this unity and planfulness of a collective will acting according to the general interest is the purpose and goal of every constitution. At every moment there is danger that some partial will and special interest may seize the state apparatus and misuse it for special purposes that do not harmonize with the general interest. These can be corrupt individuals, a dynasty, an upper class, a class organization, or a party guided by special interests. As history shows, every safeguard against the abuse of the state is only relative and must be so, since the collective will and general interest of the nation is always a disputed and questionable matter—hard to grasp, never unambiguously provable, always groping its way forward only in

the future.

Every form of state guards against the dangers of others and contains its own. Our age sees Parliamentarism—which arose as a protection against dynasties and upper classes degenerating into representatives of partial interests, and proved its worth as such—now itself threatened with falling into dependence upon partial interests. Between the individual and the state, whose relationship was hitherto mediated and determined by the party representing only one general political outlook, manifoldly interconnected organizations of special interests have inserted themselves as intermediate forms—all of them, whether they wish to admit it or not, possessing the inborn tendency to overgrow first the political party, and through it the state.

This development has led to a crisis of the parliamentary idea that is everywhere too obvious to be denied by anyone from any side. Individual states seek to protect themselves through improvements in parliamentary methods, changes in electoral law, or the introduction of the referendum—but nowhere has a means been discovered or attempted to discover and secure the collective will and general interest in another way. To replace the political parties, in which the various general views of the state interest are represented, with occupational representation—that is, with precisely those economic special organizations that threaten to overgrow the collective will of the state—would mean making the fox the keeper of the henhouse, abdicating the collective will rather than saving it.

Salvation could be found only in a general ethos among individuals which, recognizing the danger of that overgrowth of the state, forces political parties as well as those organizations under its spell, thus liberating the collective will from the embrace. But however matters may stand with hopes for the future, the ailments of the present have grown into a disease of the state. The various intermediate forms that have inserted themselves between the citizen and the state as bearers of partial interests organize the citizen as a special interest, seize control of opinion-making and its instruments, and force the political party under their spell.

Thus a confused web of secondary powers has arisen with which governments must laboriously contend and frequently make compromises. This overgrowth

of the state falsifies the formation of a collective political will; hampers and hinders its calm and unified exercise; and ultimately lets the state degenerate from a subject acting and willing according to plan and purpose into a playground of special interests inherently foreign to the purpose of the state—a development to which today only those limits are drawn that the political ethos and political education of a people are able to draw, but which can hardly be countered by institutions and laws. The state is comparable to a human being whose individual drives gain the upper hand over the will, dragging the unstable person now here, now there, letting him become unfaithful to himself and stray from his own path and interest.

This disease of the state organism wrests leadership from reason, surrendering the resolves of the statesman to manifold unobjective side-influences and side-considerations. It restricts freedom of movement, splinters the state will, and moreover usually brings a dangerous instability of governments in its wake. The period of unruly nationalism before the war, the war itself, and the European condition after the war have made monstrous demands upon the reason of states, their composure, and their freedom of movement. That capacity did not grow with the tasks, but diminished, completed the catastrophe. The crisis of the state and the crisis of world organization have fostered each other in constant reciprocal action, each increasing the destructive effects of the other.

7.

To the direct destructive effects of this development are added indirect ones. In almost all countries, the demands to be made upon the statesman have shifted. The struggle for power in the state has assumed other forms and requires other qualities and talents. Constructive work in foreign policy requires a deep knowledge of European conditions, foreign peoples, their history and mindset, and a high level of European education. These qualities, however, play an ever smaller role in the struggle to attain power in most states. Here it is parliamentary-tactical skill, acquired routine, or an inborn talent for agility and eloquence. All these qualities can certainly combine with the human prerequisites of a foreign policy that is constructive and not merely

tactical. Given the inadequacy of all human things, however, such a combination is rare and difficult.

Lloyd George, a man of extraordinary talent in his own way, does not know Europe and, according to the testimony of his collaborators, holds the most peculiar notions regarding non-English affairs. In Wilson, the professor is completely combined with the dilettante. What a statesman with European knowledge and constructive talent could have created and saved in his place! The same qualities needed to attain power are indispensable for maintaining it. Since this power is endangered at every moment in most countries, almost three-quarters of the energy and working capacity of statesmen are absorbed everywhere in the complex and difficult labor surrounding their own position. If democracy is to endure, it must be honest and courageous enough to say what is, even if it seems to testify against itself. Europe stands on the brink of ruin. There is no time for everyone to conceal their mistakes for party-tactical reasons instead of correcting them. Only for this purpose, not as a *laudator temporis acti* [praiser of time past], do I emphasize that democracy must and will destroy itself if it cannot free the state from this entanglement of side-influences and side-considerations. Pre-war Europe collapsed because all continental states—monarchies as well as democracies, and most of all autocratic Russia—submitted partly voluntarily and unconsciously, partly reluctantly and by force, to demagogy, unable in the self-created aberration of minds to recognize the rational, and to do freely and decisively what might yet be recognized.

The upper classes of Europe's old order of state—in the past century admittedly the bearers of European culture and rich in personalities of statespersonlike spirit and world experience—would not have been so easily unseated and cast aside as rotten and worn out had they, growing alongside the problems and tasks of transformed times, not lost that statespersonlike spirit and preserved a tradition other than that of the most superficial diplomatic routine. If monarchs claim to select statesmen better and more objectively than parliaments, then they and their courts must be the center and pinnacle of education, insight, and knowledge. But that was over long before the war.

Yet the indictment against the faults of monarchy does not relieve democracy

of recognizing the causes of its own inadequacy and doing everything to remedy them. Before Europe can heal, before an attempt can be made to replace its hopeless disorganization with a more durable political structure, individual countries must organize their domestic affairs in such a way that their governments are enabled to perform objectively free work over the long term. Otherwise, the best will and the greatest talent, entangled a thousandfold, will flag in the fatality that is identical everywhere.

8.

This fatality, branching out across all countries, multiplies through the interlocking of sequences of events. The multiplicity of war theaters and the manifold nature of factors influencing the course of the war fettered the political action of European states during the war. An inclination toward peace sprouting here or there was held back by new hopes or new fears that seemed to arise now on this, now on that war theater, or from a turn by this or that still-neutral power, from new inventions, or otherwise—and were waited upon. Scarcely had this waiting come to an end when a new factor from some other side shifted the aspect. A setback had been suffered, reviving the hopes of opponents, or a success had been won, raising one's own demands. Now here, now there, an already tottering cabinet was expected to fall soon, and a favorable opportunity was to be expected from new men.

In every single phase of the war, indeed in every month, a multiplicity of such interlocking considerations can be demonstrated for the policy of all states, which—ultimately nipping every impulse of reason in the bud again and again everywhere—replaced planful political action with a policy of "wait and see," that is, by awaiting and accepting the fatal outcome.

This tragedy of coincidences continues to operate today. The Spa Conference, which in the opinion of some is supposed to advance the reorganization of Europe by one step, is postponed because an Italian ministerial crisis, the German election, or the formation of a new German cabinet is still to be awaited; and before it finally takes place, new events in Russia and Turkey can shift the political interests and considerations of its principal participants to such an extent that previous plans, preparations, or agreements are revised by

one side or the other, or entangled—by way of complication or delay—with the solution of various Syrian, Balkan, or Russian questions.

Fate is no longer a natural force for our age. We can acknowledge it in no form other than that of the interlocking of various sequences of events, which we call chance in our daily lives when a slate tile slipping from a roofer's hands kills a pedestrian. The manifold nature of interlocking sequences of events, their confused entanglement, the size of the area of political action, its disorganization, as well as the general instability of state conditions, have allowed the modern form of fate to grow into a monstrous fatality of all occurrences—a fatality that a generation, capable and active in small matters but blindly shoved about in large ones, seems scarcely able to recognize, let alone effectively combat.

III.

1.

Without the first crisis—the foreign-political crisis of the organization of the world—and without the second—the domestic-political crisis of that overgrowth of the state and of reason of state—the third, the crisis of society, might well have been contained, within the limits, to be sure, of the imperfection of all earthly things.

The phenomena of this third crisis are world-famous under the name of Bolshevism. The aggregate state of humanity is to be altered; in place of states, nations, and their hitherto social stratification, the proletariat is to rule dictatorially, organized according to the so-called Soviet system. Nothing of organic further development. Everything that has been is refuted. The lowest is to be violently turned to the top, everything renewed from the ground up. But before anything can be renewed and built up, the previous world and economic order must be transformed into a field of ruins.

This movement and doctrine takes its best arguments and draws its greatest strength not from anything positive that it might be able to offer, but from the obvious defects of the world order that stands opposed to it. It is destructive, not constructive. A phenomenon of decay, unthinkable without the war—

without this war which, with graves and ruins, bears a shattering testimony against everything hitherto, against the organization of the world into nations, against the bourgeois state. It seized Russia first. There it grew historically out of the two other crises, out of the war, the defeat, the incapacity of the Kerensky state. Had the Tsarist regime possessed the strength to conclude the peace of reason, it would likely have endured given tolerable domestic-political concessions. If Kerensky, instead of continuing the war in dependence upon the machinery of war passion created and nourished by the Allies and the war profiteers, had sought peace—if he and the Russian people had been able to create a reasonably calm government with the help of a Constituent Assembly—Lenin would hardly have triumphed. A tragedy that only reality could devise: despite its dreadfulness for the rest of Europe, a warning that is still not sufficient.

What is taking place in Russia is unambiguous to anyone who has been able to observe it firsthand. It is nothing other than decay—not the further development of a capitalist economy into a socialist one, but a regression into a pre-capitalist one, a return to the conditions of an economically undeveloped country of the Middle Ages. The ruin and dying off of the large cities—Petersburg has sunk to at most a quarter of its population—a shrinking of modern means of transport to a minimum, a disappearance of industrial production on a large scale down to primitive local district industries with provincial supply areas, the complete demise of the old bourgeois society, partly through terror, disease, and hunger, partly through dispersion across the countryside or submergence into the proletariat. This proletariat itself, kept together for a little while longer as a pensioner of the state, is then gradually—or by way of a Praetorianism—dispersed over the land. There remains—besides the soldier—the peasant, unreachable in his village and untouched by any development. But he too has sunk back into a pure self-sufficiency economy, rich in paper money with which nothing can be bought any longer, completely impoverished in the tools and resources of his economy, farming only for himself, occasionally bartering from village to village or for the household goods and linen supplies of the starving bourgeoisie of the nearest city. But even this trade must cease when the sell-off of the creations of a

former civilization accompanying the death of the cities is completed. Even the great political leaders of Bolshevism are clever enough to see what is happening around them, and do not attempt to deny it when they indulge in economic-theoretical conversations and are not asserting—precisely out of propaganda interest—brilliant (but unfortunately unverifiable) successes of the Bolshevik method in the industry of the distant Urals.

For one who has seen Bolshevik Russia, it is of an almost grotesque comedy to observe with what fear the European powers lie in wait for one another so that one does not forestall the other in the resumption of trade with Russia. For neither the one nor the other is there anything else to trade than gold, jewels, platinum, and antiques—that is, the remnants of a past age—for just a little while longer. Then that too must come to an end. Russia does not produce; rather, in its present state, it can only somewhat slow its decay through the sell-off of the labor of earlier times, so as to follow as a state the example of the Moscow and Petersburg bourgeoisie, who postpone death by starvation through the gradual surrender of their household goods. The modern capitalist organization of finance, industry, and trade is destroyed. In its place—wrapped in a socialist phraseology and all sorts of sham institutions of a communal economy—has stepped the primitive capitalism of the Middle Ages: black-market trading, racketeering, and corruption, hidden goods and hidden money; but even this system is built only to the smallest extent on production, and for the vast majority on the plundering of earlier labor, and therefore sinks back ever further into an ever more primitive economy. That is the concrete fact of the matter.

The European who suffers from the present condition of the so-called bourgeois world order, and has not himself experienced or seen the hard facts of the Russian development, easily falls victim to the seductive veil that Bolshevik theory has spread over the concrete fact of the matter. The previous world order—in politics the coexistence and opposition of nation-states, in economics the capitalist-individualist order—seems to have led itself, and to be leading itself, [*ad absurdum*]. The bourgeois salvation, the League of Nations, has cruelly disappointed and today can scarcely be protected against mockery and derision. What wonder that the hoping and suffering millions

turn to the gospel of a new world order that aims to replace the previous economic order, as well as the previous division of the world into self-lacerating nation-states, with a radically new one: the international rule of the united proletariat! What wonder if every reference to the bleeding ruins of Russian life is pushed aside with the argument that a new world order cannot arise without painful labor pains! But the paths of world history are not unambiguous—it does not always prove the seemingly new right against the seemingly old, and only rarely can the present decide what in truth is old and what in truth is the new. The outcome of the struggle between the so-called new world order of the Leninist faith and the old will be decided by the interlocking of sequences of events, which in Russia lets the new grow thoroughly obsolete before the old collapses in the rest of Europe.

While in the European countries the increasing impoverishment of the surplus millions and the continuing incapacity of the previous world order drive the masses toward a new faith, this faith in Russia itself proves to be not something new, but merely the ideology of a catastrophe that, instead of a new socialist economy, brings about an ancient medieval one, and instead of an international world state of the proletariat, a no less ancient national soldierdom. Thus the irony of fate leaves yearning hopes hanging in empty space, veiling from a mentally confused generation the no longer discoverable meaning of events, in which a later time may then simply and dryly recognize infirmity and decay.

2.

While Russia in this third crisis has perished as far as a state encompassing two half-continents with 150 million people can perish, the remaining states of continental Europe defend themselves until now with success in more or less severe struggles. It is undoubtedly correct that Bolshevism, bound as such to typically Russian prerequisites, is not directly transferable to other countries and peoples. What takes place in Russia in the form of Bolshevism threatens other countries in other forms. It does not matter whether economic ruin and regression into the primitive is called the "dictatorship of the proletariat" or something else. What is taking place in German-Austria, and in Vienna in

particular, is not called Bolshevism, and yet economically it is the same process. Vienna is dying, and German-Austria ekes out an ever poorer existence for a little while longer through the sell-off of the production of earlier times. German-Austria is the most unsustainable of the many unsustainable creations of the peace treaty, and therefore the earliest and most forceful example of its consequences.

But the remaining continental states formerly involved in the war all have no reason to look down contemptuously upon the Austrian or Russian warning, so long as—despite more favorable defensive conditions and greater productive power—they are willing and able only to numb and slow the disease through all sorts of medicines, but not to remedy its causes. The permanent causes of the third crisis, however, lie in the first and second, and will be remedied only when Europe is politically organized in such a way that, instead of disturbing and consuming themselves in continuous frictions, hostilities, and conflicts, the peoples are able to work alongside one another relatively calmly in long-term economic cooperation, so that each, by healing its own wounds, can help heal those of the others.

In the process of economic regression that has taken place in Russia and is taking place in German-Austria, a phenomenon plays a decisive role as both cause and effect—one from which not a single continental country formerly involved in the war has been spared or has been able to free itself to this day. That is inflation. All continental states, with the exception of the neutrals, even today cover a large portion of their state expenditures by multiplying paper money. That is nothing other than the modern form of bankruptcy. The open declaration of bankruptcy is an honesty no longer customary today, but perhaps also no longer possible. All countries shrink back from it because the modern state—with its countess army of civil servants, recipients of pensions and annuities, its banks, savings banks, and insurance companies almost consistently overfilled with claims against the state—has so thoroughly penetrated the entire private economy that today a declaration of bankruptcy by the state means the collapse of the entire private economy. Therefore, the chronic disease is preferred to the acute one, and bankruptcy is slowed by devaluing money. But this process too, continued long enough, ends fatally.

Money, multiplied beyond measure, negates itself. This development is complete in Russia, and nearly complete in German-Austria. The Russian peasant, and soon the Austrian peasant as well, has so much paper money that he no longer surrenders his produce for paper tokens, but only for goods. But since production in Russia—with the exception of the printing press—stands still, and goods are therefore unavailable, the peasant stops producing more than he himself needs. With that, however, the process of economic regression is completed. Then the printing press too has led itself [*ad absurdum*]. The European states are walking a narrow path along an abyss.

So long as industrial production still takes place—so long as the peasant still receives goods for the devalued money after all—so long as there is a prospect that, with an increase in industrial production, the work of the printing press can at least slowly be restricted, it may be hoped that the path taken, though narrow, may yet remain passable in the end. But woe if work performance does not rise, but falls. Then the end is here, in chaotic confusion or the slow dying off of the surplus millions: the return to a primitive economy and the demise of European civilization.

3.

The disease threatens all states of continental Europe—not all to the same degree, and not all in the same form. Some more, others less; some as an acute crisis, others as a slow infirmity. The endangerment of one is also the endangerment of the other. Just as the disease and its causes are common, so too the interest in combating it is a common one, and the means of defense are to be found and applied only jointly.

This truth is simple. It is really not difficult to see that the economic catastrophe can be remedied only through increased productivity, but that the political disorganization of Europe—in both its foreign-political and domestic-political manifestations—stands in the way of this increased productivity as an obstacle.

From the 5,000 German locomotives of the armistice—which, partly too heavy for France's railways, are missing in Germany while clogging the tracks in France—to the economically disruptive occupation of the left bank of the

Rhine and the hampering of traffic with the right bank; from the economically senseless severing of the connection between the Lorraine iron mining, Ruhr coal, and Rhenish steel industry—a severing that France is not willing or able to overcome organizationally—to the strangulation of East Prussia, the allocation of highly developed areas with purely German populations to the inefficient Polish state overburdened with insoluble problems; to the attempt to tear Upper Silesia out of the mechanism of the German economy as well, although Germany must collapse completely without its industry and Poland is not in a position to master it economically; to the senseless forced breeding of a Polish militarism lacking both economic and financial foundations; to, finally, the complete confusion in Turkey, the Balkans, and German-Austria—everywhere idling factories, desolate economic centers, empty port cities that have lost their hinterlands, bickerings, border chicanery, traffic blockades, endless commissions without results bear witness to the sad work of complete disorganization.

The consequences of the war are not overcome in this manner; rather, they continue to operate with ever-growing force. Since the conclusion of the armistice, the overall situation has not grown better, but worse. It will continue to grow worse until the catastrophe of complete ruin, if the causes that led to the war, that prevented its timely conclusion, that caused the nonsense of a one-and-a-quarter-year armistice without peace, that caused the absurdity of the Versailles work, continue to determine the life and actions of European states.

The three crises that we have attempted to sketch here in fleeting outline are most closely intertwined. Each one, powerful enough on its own, furthers and sharpens the other. In their totality, they seem to form a world fate, as whose puppets statesmen and politicians move—reluctantly or blindly, trapped in hatred or devoted to short-lived tactics, senselessly or inadequately. It is no new fate, but the same old one that also led to the World War. It is one and the same process continuing in altered form. It has its economic as well as its political side, but one unambiguous overall meaning.

The monstrous process of mechanization of our age has allowed mechanisms to arise in all fields—in war machines, economic powers, capital formation,

newspaper trusts, interest organizations—which, all of them children of some small-scale reason, once created but existing with a willful life of their own, have subjected total reason to themselves, both for the individual state and for the world as a whole. Having become dependent upon creatures it created, our age has become powerful in small matters, powerless in large ones. It is a spectacle of deep tragedy how every attempt at a remedial action, every word of turning back gets caught in the fogs of this fate and, entangled a hundredfold, ultimately falls ineffective to the ground; how the European bourgeoisie—thoughtlessly clinging to the temporal error of the constant progress of humanity, or trotting mournfully along the accustomed path—does not see and does not want to see that it is living off the accumulated labor of earlier years and is scarcely capable of recognizing the damages of the current world order, let alone bearing a new one out of itself; how on the other side the working class—radicalizing itself in almost all countries, convinced of the unsustainability of the present condition—believes itself the harbinger of a new order, but in reality, in this belief, is only an unconscious instrument of destruction and ruin, including its own. The new parasites of economic disorganization, the complaining wealth of yesterday, the petty bourgeois sinking to a proletarian, the believing worker who imagines he is founding a new world—they all seem embraced by the same fate, they all seem blind men digging their own graves.

IV

1.

In progress humanity shall and must believe. Here, however, speak is made of ruin and of doom. We are not here to perceive and, before that which is perceived and allegedly inescapable, to lay our hands in our lap. History does not allow itself to be looked at over the shoulder, and in the end it gives the right to the living, which—blind perhaps, but acting nonetheless—moves its hands.

In a *fatum* Asia may believe. Europe—the impatient, the passionate, the never quieted, the erring, but ever striving—does not recognize death. To recognize

the disease can mean for it only to perceive the means to become whole again.

With the common distress, the recognition of its causes grows in all places. Not only among the neutrals—those more or less uninvolved in the passions of the war and uninjured by its moral shocks—not only among the vanquished, whom nameless misfortune has made seeing, but also in the lands of the victors themselves, the warning voices of European reflection increase both in number and in strength.

The course of history is tentative and wavering. The path it is accustomed to tread leads neither straight upward into the heights nor uniformly downward. At every moment of historical life, something new is in the process of emerging while the obsolete decays; forces of ascent and of decline intersect. Within states as in the world, the bearers of the future alternate. The ones step back, and leadership falls, deservedly or undeservedly, to others. The doom of the three crises is first and in the first place a doom of the European continent. The American continent and East Asia are scarcely touched. The European has to reconcile himself to the fact that the accent today no longer rests upon Europe, but upon America. The European of the Continent has to acknowledge that within Europe itself, the weight has shifted in nearly all domains to the disadvantage of the Continent and to the benefit of the English islands. The crisis under which the Continent threatens to collapse is for the United States at first merely an event at a distance, and is in England only a relatively light concern. The European continent is not the world.

Beside the somber picture of the European future stands the brighter one of the English world empire—which in rapid ascent, with the fruits of victory, is able to heal the wounds of the war—and the untroubled picture of America. The question is whether the development of the European continent will continue to fulfill itself in forms so catastrophic that even the English world empire will be unable to withdraw itself from its direct or indirect effects; or whether England and America are not only strong and sensible enough, but also willing, to save Europe before it is too late; or, if not to save it, at least to hold back the acute catastrophe and drag along the disease, which may then perpetuate itself in gradual decline, or finally end in slow, modest recovery.

The possibilities are open; to estimate probabilities can tempt no one who does not share the cheap belief that history always allows the probable to happen. What further follows is the work of man, and in the end, the element of personality—which cannot be removed from history—decides after all.

2.

When the President of the United States of America arrived in Paris for the peace deliberations of the victorious powers, he appeared to suffering and hoping humanity as the bringer of a new world order. He seemed, and was, filled with the best intentions. During the war he had set forth excellent principles of a new world order, and at the conclusion of the armistice he had known how to bind his allies to these principles. In the great struggle, America had given the decision economically and militarily. His allies thanked him for the victory. The moral, economic, and financial weight of the United States ought to have enabled his word and his will to succeed.

The President yielded completely. Of his noble intentions nothing, absolutely nothing, became reality. His famous fourteen points are distorted into a caricature. All the noble principles elsewhere set up—of justice, of economic equality of rights, of the self-determination of peoples, of the publicity of negotiations—are hideously mocked. Diplomatic haggling was kept as anxiously secret in Paris as ever. Of the free self-determination of nations, witness is borne by the millions of Germans severed without the right of voting in the East, West, and South, and by the prohibition of union (*Anschluss*) imposed over German-Austria. Out of the economic equality of rights of nations has come a one-sided disenfranchisement of the vanquished. Occasional phraseological turns and provisions of the treaty attempt in vain to veil the nakedness of this state of affairs. The *Anschluss* of Austria is not forbidden for all eternity, but is subjected for later to the decision of the League of Nations; since, however, unanimity is required for this decision of the League of Nations, no one is thereby deceived, though the understanding of the President of the United States is thereby mocked—whose conscience was meant to be quieted, and perhaps was quieted, by such artifices.

The senseless treaty—not ending the war, but perpetuating it, pregnant with

new wars—is wrapped in a League of Nations Covenant which, according to the will and opinion of the President of the United States, is meant to bring and secure lasting peace; but which, according to the ulterior thoughts of those who accepted it in amended form, is intended to perpetuate the work of Versailles as a Holy Alliance, practically prevent its revision, and ultimately suffocate it through a completely unwieldy apparatus. The decisive paragraph is § 5, according to which the decisions of the Assembly and of the Supreme Council require the unanimity of the represented League members. This paragraph turns the whole League of Nations into a dispensable decoration. In order that a group of powers execute unanimously adopted decisions, no covenant is needed. Such decisions were executed hitherto as well. If in future they are to be bound to the official channels of the League of Nations, that is not furtherance but hindrance—slowness, not acceleration.

If Germany in future wishes to conduct the revision of the peace and lets itself be referred to the League of Nations, it can attempt to move the General Assembly of the League—a completely unwieldy and incapacitated formation, if it should ever actually sit—to decide unanimously, according to § 19, to invite the individual League members to the reconsideration of treaties that have become inapplicable, the maintenance of which could endanger world peace. If the League members coming into question do not wish to do so, the decision concerned does not come to pass or is not obeyed. But if the members concerned do wish to do so, then there is needed neither a General Assembly, nor a decision, nor a League of Nations Covenant.

If Germany wishes to reach the revision of the peace by way of the League of Nations, it must first of all conduct and carry through the revision of this League of Nations itself—transforming it out of a Holy Alliance of victorious governments into an instrument of international conscience capable of action and decision; that is, it must pursue the removal of § 5, the creation of a truly unhampered League leadership, and its control by a parliament that represents not the special interest of the governments, but the common interest of the peoples. Germany will have perished before it has reached a relief of its situation by this circuitous and, in today's position, impassable detour; and the League of Nations would have fulfilled the task intended for it by M.

Clemenceau: namely, the task of perpetuating the Peace of Versailles, quietly strangling every possibility of revision, and stupefying the world conscience in the misty haze of humanitarian appearances.

The President of the United States—upon his arrival in Europe the bearer of all new hopes—has left behind upon his departure, no doubt himself deeply disappointed, only disappointments. His intentions are turned into their opposite. His noble principles, which were meant to found a new world order, have been made subservient to the maintenance and concealment of the old, whose dangers they were supposed to banish. M. Wilson first allowed any influence over the shaping of the armistice—and through it the military factor of his own position of power—to be wrested out of his hand during its conclusion and execution. He then stepped to the negotiations concerning the determination of the conditions of peace without any knowledge of the European machinery, ill-informed and without a plan for the concrete application of his points—slow, clumsy, without any technique of negotiation—and succumbed almost defenselessly, perceiving always too late what was being played, to the superior arts of the allied Prime Ministers playing with his awkwardness. Foreign policy is a highly concrete business and from time immemorial grants success only to the noble intention that knows how to master hard facts. The political fate of the President of the United States—who willed the good and had to create the evil—remains a warning for everyone who, in noble enthusiasm, forgets that hard in space things collide.

3.

The path trodden by the President of the United States does not lead to the goal. A new world order cannot be preached into existence by a theological temperament, but can only be mastered from factual givens and human shortcomings by a political intellect. What must happen? And how can that happen which must happen?

The first prerequisite of the recovery of Europe is the change of world opinion in all countries. It must become general European conviction that under present circumstances the great European interests are common ones,

because the distress is a common one and to be remedied only in common. This conviction must strengthen into a Pan-European sentiment.

It is beyond doubt that groups and parties of such opinion will arise in all European peoples. In some they have arisen or are in the concept of arising. The compulsion of things—the practical questions arising at all corners and ends—must drive even the reluctant to gradual reflection.

But the sentiment alone does not suffice. It must be able to force into its spell the governments and—what is today almost more important—the machinery overgrowing the state and still set upon other ideas. Such a reaction of reason—the recognition also of the causes that brought about the present catastrophe and have up to today, instead of amending it, worsened it—must further enable the individual states to secure a relatively stable and, in its resolves, relatively free direction of foreign affairs. Without such, even the best sentiment is mere impotence. Every action—interrupted by changes of government at home or with one of the partners, slowed down by the waiting for such or the feeling-out of new ministers, by the hopes aroused in the one, the fears awakened in the other, and often nipped in the bud by uncertainty—must entangle itself in unforeseen, unmanageable side-moments. Only when these general prerequisites are fulfilled, when in thinking and acting the bad habits of the age begin to mend, can the great and many practical questions whose solution alone can save Europe be tackled, at least with hope of half a success.

If that is to happen, the unwieldy and immovable League of Nations must be replaced by a Supreme Council of the leading European men, formed out of victors, vanquished, and neutrals. If this Supreme Council is to create anything, the men who belong to it—or at the least the majority of the most powerful—must be filled with the European spirit and be willing to build up constructively, instead of hunting down small advantages over one another in all kinds of compensation businesses. This Supreme Council must transform the political and economic structure of Europe; it must remove all that manifold and intentionally disorganizing and destructive matter and replace it through a planned structure that might be able to secure the maximum of political quiet and economic productivity.

It is under present circumstances of the time—even after a reaction of European reason against the dangers of the present condition—not to be hoped that such a reconstruction *in toto* could be planned and taken in hand by the European powers. Although the tempo of the age is a rapid one, although the unmaintainability of the present settlement and the severe instability of internal conditions in more than one land of Europe can lead to events that force radical measures, the politician does well not to stray all too far into the bright space of extravagant hopes.

4.

But the radical reconstruction *in toto*—as a renegotiation of all peace conclusions today impassable even for the moderate victor, because uncertain and not calculable in its end-result—is not the only path for the vanquished either. The peace conclusions can be interpreted, completed, or transformed through new special treaties that regulate anew the practical problems in the sequence in which they press themselves forward. That is the minimum demand—not the German, but the European demand. But that must be fulfilled, and indeed in foreseeable time.

The occupation of the Rhenish lands harms both partners. It costs money uselessly and absorbs human working power. For unproductive purposes, it diminishes the sum that Germany can pay to the productive ones of reconstruction. It diminishes besides, through traffic hindrances, frictions, administrative difficulties, and chicanery, the economic productivity of the provinces. It poisons through black troops and militaristic brutalities the atmosphere of the present. It sows the hatred that some future must harvest. As a guarantee against a disarmed Germany it is superfluous. But already this simple question shows the magnitude of the difficulties. There will hardly in foreseeable time be a French cabinet that could plan and execute the evacuation of the Rhenish lands.

Then a purely objective understanding between Germany and France, unclouded by any political side- or ulterior thoughts, must come to pass, in order to make possible again the economically rational cooperation between coal, coke, iron ore (*minette*), and steel in the Lorraine-Rhenish industrial

territory separated by new borders.

Then the German indemnity sum to the Allies must be definitively fixed, and indeed at a height that corresponds not only to the meager productivity of the plundered land, but also leaves to the German people the greater part of the fruits of its labor and therewith the motives to labor. There is no one who can force the German worker to labor only for France. Already the attempt leads to catastrophe.

The height of the sum must furthermore be so measured, the mode of payment so regulated, that the German state budget—which today must pay delivered coal, confiscated securities, cattle, ammonia, machinery, etc., to its own citizens with paper—is not forced to a paper economy at the end of which stands again catastrophe. The payment of every sum now fixed, even under consideration of all these moments, has for its further prerequisite that Upper Silesia remains with Germany. If the vote turns out in favor of Poland, the Allies will not only receive no money, but will themselves have to make considerable payments, be it to finance emigration, be it to finance an orderly dying-away of the German industrial population, which would then be completely no longer capable of life.

So long as the French government does not dare to portray the true position openly, and continues to base new notes upon imaginary payments instead of resolving upon sufficient taxes; so long as the French people does not see that the war has consumed not only the rents of the vanquished but also those of the victors, and only new and doubled labor of all can help—the problem of indemnity (lest the sudden unveiling of the economic ruins of Europe lead the deluded peoples to violent afflictions of the mind) will not be solved in the hitherto manner, hardly treated openly, and probably dragged out, so as to continue to act destructively as an element of intolerable uncertainty.

Here, in place of the governments, an international council must tell the peoples the truth, and must beyond that place before all states minimum demands of a regulated financial economy, without the fulfillment of which none can grant loans to another, not even against political or other special advantages. A consistent carrying-through of such a dictatorship of financial solidarity must force the states to screw back the unproductive armaments in

which they exhaust themselves today, at least to the measure of their financial productivity.

If here the inevitability of the passions still shackles reason, it should yet at least be possible to rationalise European economic life piece by piece. It is relatively simple to remove from the various peace treaties all those provisions which, without benefiting anyone, serve only to the damage and harassment of the defeated.

Since the war has destroyed everywhere, and goods and working men are lacking in all places while there are too many consuming ones, all problems of economic competition and trade jealousy among the states of Europe have completely shifted. The provisions of the Versailles Treaty are born out of the views and tendencies of the pre-war time and have today become objectively without subject matter. It comes down to raising the total production of Europe, so that Europe can pay its debts and feed and clothe its people with its products. Under these circumstances reason commands not to hinder traffic, but to promote it, to promote economic cooperation and so to heighten the yield of production and lower its costs. The European peoples altogether have the interest to offer to the merchant, entrepreneur, the engineer or chemist seeking a place, as to the wandering worker, firm and calculable legal conditions. If the Polish, Ruthenian, or Slovak agricultural worker folds his hands at home instead of chopping beets in Germany, Poland and France share the damage with Germany. If the technician or chemist travels about in his home seeking a place, while giant colonial empires are not developed for lack of men, or new states absorb all learned forces in military or political tasks and do not get forward economically, that is today an intolerable absurdity for the European total economy.

Reason would command that the European states forthwith came together with the plan, in the common distress, to conduct their economy jointly where it is necessary—not in a theoretical giant building, but piece by piece, just as the practical problems press themselves forward, through small practical agreements, special compacts, or where it is necessary (as in the field of payment systems) through international institutions; only with the single thought to clear everything hindering out of the way and to create in equal

legal bases of free activity—in traffic, passport, and payment systems, through customs simplification and free lists—at least the preconditions of a rational economy. If this succeeds upon the one field, this will succeed upon other fields as well; and since the pressing distress is a common one, experience can after all force an as-yet-blinded Europe to acknowledge that the suffering of the one is today also the suffering of the other, that the path entered upon is the right one and must be built out piece by piece into a European economic union—which, once arisen and prospering, would have to force the spiritual and political constitution of the age into its spell. An idea as yet extravagant today, and yet forced upon us through distress and danger.

5.

But a Supreme Council of European Reason will have trouble to reach even up to here—and indeed in time. The European powers—which undertook too late to avoid the war, ended it too late, and allowed the formal peace to follow the armistice too late—will probably also be too late in wishing to replace this formal peace, which is only a continuation of the war, at least in the economic field, through a true peace. And yet this solidifying upon the economic field is easy and simple in comparison with that which reason has to demand upon the political field.

The peace conclusions of Versailles, St. Germain, and Neuilly have regulated the territorial question under the dictate of France in the sense of the greatest possible disorganization. The borders have been drawn to create friction surfaces and render understandings difficult, out of the political and military-political motives of a tradition no longer maintainable today, without any regard to state and economic capacity. This disorganization—out of which ever new conflicts must arise—may afford French diplomacy for a while longer the satisfaction of deciding, as arbiter of a balkanized Europe, over the welfare and woe of powerless neighbors, and of numbing rising anxieties in the luster of a hegemony over a field of ruins.

Should Europe be able to prosper economically again, this whole destructive work would have to be reconstructed in a constructive sense; in place of intentional disorganization a planned organization would have to be set,

which everywhere removes the friction surfaces, lets sources of conflict dry up, restores the rational economic connections, assigns to the states the administrative, economic, and military tasks according to their capacity—so that the ones do not suffocate from an overfulness of unoccupied men and forces, while the others collapse overstrained at giant tasks for which the quantity as well as the quality of men are lacking. Then Europe would have to be debalkanized again.

But the whole aspect of today's political condition—the newer peace conclusions of the Entente, the Polish advance into the Ukraine, the blindness or helplessness of the Entente toward the German-Austrian development—shows to the politician once for all dependent upon realities that the ideal demand of a Pan-European, constructive revision of the Paris peace conclusions may indeed be set, the most urgent warning shatteringly founded, but demand and warning can only echo unheeded, and things roll onward compulsively in the old sense—toward the abyss.

6.

Only a change of mind of the world, a change of will of the principal powers concerned can let a Supreme Council of European Reason arise.

The neutrals—more or less untouched by the passions of the war, already for the sake of their smallness dependent upon the cooperation of the peoples—have from time immemorial been clear-sighted, but powerless. For the vanquished, staggering along the edge of the abyss, insight is easy. The recovery of Europe is their recovery. The new states—nationalistically excited, it is true, but manifoldly entangled in the general suffering—would likely be brought to reason by the compulsion of things itself, if one decided in Paris to foster this development instead of suppressing it. Of the victorious principal powers, Italy, with the political intellect long native to it, has comprehended that the Pan-European interest is also its own.

The decision lies with France and England. France clings to the dream of founding a hegemony upon the balkanization of Europe—knowing perhaps, but not daring to confess to itself, that through such means of destruction it must finally destroy itself. Upon a change of mind of the French people there

is scarcely to hope. Here everything—governments, parties, generals, opinions and habits, hatred, revenge, will to rule, fame and vanity, old lies and great traditions—is bound in fatality. Here warning reason, powerless before the *peripeteia*, leaves the theater of passion weeping, and every hope of reversal and insight becomes presumption.

Since in England the voices of reason multiply, the hopes of the hopeless turn to it. But these voices of reason—even the most heeded, the book of Keynes—differ from all continental voices. They are more the voices of spectators than of participants. The European suffering is at first only a suffering of the Continent; hence the English can believe that their islands do not belong to the community of fate of the European continent. The inner transformations that England too may have to pass through as a social and psychological consequence of the war may be deep; but to them will belong neither the dangerousness of the matter, nor the sharpness and bitterness of the form, that have shaken the continental lands. A victory over the opponents and over individual allies—unlikely in this extent—has brought to English policy and economy an immense gain in colonies, ships, commercial advantages, and prestige; and in its train a comprehensive economic prosperity will easily help to overcome internal struggles and anxieties.

It is manifoldly overlooked in Germany, and may be hard for the continental European to comprehend, that the center of gravity of English policy lies not in Europe, but in the world empire across the seas. The Continent is—especially in times of its powerlessness—for England a question of the second rank. One lets it occupy itself with itself and has one's hands free in the remaining parts of the earth. That is the tradition that has created the rise of English power, maintained through the memory of old experiences and confirmed again and again through new ones. Now too, once more, the opportunity and the temptation beckon to exchange the English support of France—bound as it is in the German question—again and again for political and economic positions in other parts of the earth.

Nevertheless the hopes of the Continent turn to English policy. Because it is the only one that, if it wishes to help, can also help. Because it is besides the relatively most flexible and, on the ground of a great political experience of

the people, more enabled than others to prefer cool deliberation to blind passion. Therefore the hopeless cling to the possibility—as to the today uniquely visible and last one—that under present circumstances, to which the traditions of the past are not applicable, the interest of the English islands cannot permit the ruin of the European continent (which economically as politically must shake the position of England also), and must command English policy to conduct the reorganization of the European continent. Numerous and honest English voices have spoken for this necessity; and if really to these sentiments, arising more out of ethical and humanitarian motives, the insight into the economic interest joined itself, actions of policy could follow upon these words of good will.

England can today be the arbiter of Europe. Its voice decides. It could, in case it resolved to bring the powers of the Continent together to a step-by-step reorganization of European things, be secure of a following not only with the opponents and neutrals, but also with the clear-sighted among the allies of yesterday.

If, however, even this small hope deceives—if France persists in its tragic preoccupation, but England, occupied overseas, restricts itself to pitying the Continent as a semi-participating spectator—then fate will fulfill itself. The economic self-destruction of the Continent will be continued and lead to a marasmus of the peoples, wherein the non-emigrating part of the surplus millions, before it is consumed through hunger and wars, must surrender the political and social conditions to manifold unrest. The state conditions will not be able to escape a fatal instability, which outward and inward must repeatedly entice to restore a lost balance through sudden movements and daring resolves. This frame of mind will hardly be capable of holding back the dozens of at first local wars that must arise out of the balkanization of eastern Europe.

About the character of the policy that is conducted in the eastern half of Europe, and which will draw the western into its spell, a doubt is not permitted even today, when the ink of the peace treaties is scarcely dry. From Estonia to Greece everyone arms against the neighbor, mortal enemies lie in wait for one another, rebellions are stoked, secret compacts concluded, again dissolved and changed; and the European great powers, instead of mastering

things and keeping the small ones in check, fight against one another in a labyrinth of intrigues—be it for their own small advantages, be it for the advantages of their proteges, of which each has different ones. It is the old Balkans—enlarged, run wild, and even less than formerly to be isolated.

7.

Germany is powerless, weaponless. It is economically ruined, spiritually broken. It is only more object, no longer subject of world events. To it remain only patience and hope. It can contribute little to the salvation of Europe, but that little it ought to do.

It must first of all rescue itself psychically out of the condition of softening of the bones. It must defend itself against ruin with the means that remain to it, and not allow itself to be exploited as a corvée people without even moral defense, only to fall victim one day to passionate resolves of despair. It has no weapons, and can yet defend itself in some matters with the right and the double pride of the vanquished. It should bring its internal affairs into order, and indeed in such a manner that the state leadership—free from side-influences and considerations—can objectively and calmly go the path of reason, offering to foreign countries a counterpart of predictable reliability and tolerable endurance. To that belongs that the state is able to keep itself free from any overgrowth by the irresponsible machinery of special powers. Against this danger there is no other safeguard than the sentiment of the people itself. Only a general civic consciousness (*Staatsgefühl*) of the people itself can procure for the *de facto* governing party committees the freedom of objective resolve and steady labor. Here is opportunity enough right and left to help and amend.

If it succeeds in thus ordering and firming things in the interior—if the poor, trampled land, despite all, amid helpless confusion is able to offer the spectacle of state strength and quiet—then we shall be able to defend before the world with success the thesis that Europe cannot become whole without Germany and must become whole with Germany; and a Germany as spokesman of Pan-European sentiment will finally be heard, understood, and heeded.

Germany has today and for all time no other policy to conduct than a Pan-

European one. It would have done wisely in the decades before the war to conduct or even dream of no other. One cannot conduct a world policy in all parts of the earth, in the heart of Europe with far-open borders, in the midst of hostile neighbors protected in their rear. Immature dreams have avenged themselves hideously. If before the war political opinions in Germany wavered without hold between the two equally thoughtless extremes—on the one side the stupid belief in mere force and even more in its empty gesture, on the other side the pious child-delusion of international kindness—the ones like the others ought to be cured today, or should comprehend that European sentiment is not only according to the ideal tradition of the German spirit, but according to the soberest interest, the true national sentiment of the German.

Wilhelm von Humboldt writes in a memorandum directed to the Baron vom Stein of December 1813: *"Germany must be free and strong, in order to nourish the necessary self-feeling, to go after its national development quietly and undisturbed, and to be able permanently to assert the beneficent place that it occupies in the midst of the European nations for the same."* More we do not wish, cannot and should not wish. But so much to demand as our right and to strive for with decision, we do not cease. Defenseless in the heart of Europe, trampled and tormented, we suffer the European suffering: knowing that Europe will become whole or perish with us.

8.

Not enough that humanity be destined to suffer—it longs to discover and wish to believe a total sense. It seeks it now here, now there; but the theories—to women and children perhaps a fleeting comfort—only confuse the already sufficiently confused event.

World history is not unambiguous. It does not lead a straight, even if stony path slowly upward toward some height of the human race. It is a constant struggle between many goals, thwarts again and again its own intentions, entangles itself in its own threads, no longer finds its way, and begins anew, continuously changes the bearer of its plans and errs again and again. It has its *corsi* and *ricorsi*, and to all the rest, the upward of the one is the downward of the other.

World history has no total sense. Progress is a moral demand, but not a historical fact. All sense is human work and human task, and cannot be found in history if it is not wrung from it. The world is not so arranged that it could tolerate the invention of every new machine, not endanger through the one achievements the others, and finally through its own works destroy itself.

World history was hitherto the history of Europe. It will in future be first the history of the English islands, of the American continent, and of East Asia. Europe itself is comprehended in a process of regression and self-destruction. Whether that is to perpetuate itself in a slow marasmus or whether a new thing will be able to arise out of it, the Europeans will decide. History holds at all times many possibilities ready. That holds particularly of crisis-like times, which never let themselves be seen behind their mostly question-worthy mask. There it is idle to hang after formulas and, for example, to wish to establish that now the time of national states is past, or the capitalist order will yield to a socialist one. History resists all such isms, and lets occasionally, to the mockery of humanity, the newest socialism turn over into an already known nationalism or a regressive small-capitalism; lets a Brusilov climb onto the shoulders of a Radek; lets men of letters and prophets quietly drive their lesser but loud trade, in order perhaps one day, when the wild mist clears, to point mockingly to the two ancient powers that have remained standing upright because no shouting affects them: to the peasant and the Church.

But it can mock us only because in the large it wills nothing, and in the small repeatedly tasks us anew to give it a will. The sense of the event can only be evaluated from the individual organic entity which—in ever new starts, struggling, conquering, collapsing, and resurrecting again—wrestles for its kind of sense.

Up to today humanity is no such living-organic entity. Whether distress, danger, and common interest will be able to form it together into such a one, or whether at least communities of peoples will form and, once formed, gradually expand; whether the International of the proletariat or of capital—serving itself of this or that people, reaching over the national formations and boundaries—will create a supra-national and yet organic thing, is today still left to the one to hope, to the second to fear, to the third to doubt. Until

further notice the peoples remain the living-organic entity, and therewith the bearers of history and the shapers of its sense.

Great peoples can indeed plunge headlong from their height. But no fall can and may be a final one for them. They can suffer and postpone hopes by centuries; but they die only when they cease to form, to preserve their own sense and, as well as it goes, time and again to wring it anew from the surrounding resistance.